



EM Recovery NEWS FLASH

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SRS Recovery Act Completes Major Lower Three Runs Project Cleanup

AIKEN, S.C. – American Recovery and Reinvestment Act can now claim that 85 percent of the Savannah River Site (SRS) has been cleaned up with the recent completion of the Lower Three Runs (stream) Project.

Twenty miles long, Lower Three Runs leaves the main body of the 310-square mile site and runs through parts of Barnwell and Allendale Counties until it flows into the Savannah River. Government property on both sides of the stream acts as a buffer as it runs through privately-owned property. Completing this project reduces the site's footprint by another 10 percent.

"We excavated and disposed of over five million pounds of contaminated soil from three specific sites along the stream, erected miles of fence and placed over 2,000 signs in order to make Lower Three Runs safe and to reduce our site's footprint by another 10 percent," said Chris Bergren, Manager, Area Completion Projects. "Cost efficiencies obtained through the America Recovery and Reinvestment Act Project at SRS provided the funding necessary to accelerate this cleanup of Lower Three Runs."



Power washers ensured the removal of any radioactive contamination clinging to heavy equipment used to remove soil near Lower Three Runs at SRS. The equipment was then radiologically surveyed to confirm acceptable release limits were met.

According to U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Lead Project Manager Robert Pope, "The EPA is pleased with the cleanup of hot spots of contaminated soil and sediment along Lower Three Runs. EPA worked closely with the Department of Energy, South Carolina DHEC, and SRS cleanup crews, engineers and members of management to ensure all cleanup goals and expectations were met on an accelerated schedule," said Pope. "The cleanup actions, along with the installation of miles of fencing and warning signs, demonstrate SRS's commitment to protect human health and act as a good neighbor to residents living in the area."

Because low levels of contaminants remain in soils and sediments, fishing or trespassing on DOE property is not allowed. "However, testing of the water in Lower Three Runs has shown it to be safe, with contaminant levels below EPA standards," added Pope.

In addition to completing this project on budget and ahead of schedule, the work has provided an economic stimulus to area small businesses. "Our sub-contract workers, about 140 of them, were extremely efficient," said Bergren. "Their work ethic, planning and equipment management was impressive, particularly considering we were working during two of the hottest months on record, right after heavy rains in May."

Though workers encountered three of the four types of poisonous snakes found in this area at various times during the cleanup effort and labored under very difficult conditions, no one was injured.

Landowners near the stream were pleased with the results of the project. "We greatly appreciate that SRS was willing to invest the time and money into making the stream safe," said Jason Houck, who owns property adjacent to Lower Three Runs. "They did a great job. Everything ran smoothly."

According to Van Keisler, Manager, Federal Remediation Section, Bureau of Land and Waste Management, South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (SCDHEC), "Once again, by SCDHEC, EPA, and DOE working collaboratively together, a successful project that protects human health and the environment has been achieved. The removal of the contaminated soils and sediments helps ensure that the valuable water resources of the State of South Carolina remain protected. Further, the placement of upgraded fencing and signage will help ensure that no one inadvertently wanders onto property owned by DOE, further enhancing DOE's commitment to protect human health."

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